their power, to destroy them off the face of the earth. But behold, satan did stir up the hearts of the more parts of the Nephites, insomuch that they did unite with those bands of robbers, and did enter into their covenants, and their oaths, that they would protect and preserve one another, in whatsoever difficult circumstances they should be placed in, that they should not suffer for their murders, and their plunderings, and their stealings.

And it came to pass that they did have their signs, yea, their secret signs, and their secret words; and this that they might distinguish a brother who had entered into the covenant, that whatsoever wickedness his brother should do, he should not be injured by his brother, nor by those who did belong to his band, who had taken this covenant; and thus they might murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit whoredoms, and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country, and also the laws of their God; and whosoever of those which belonged to their band, should reveal unto the world of their wickedness and their abominations, should be tried, not according to the laws of their country, but according to the laws of their wickedness, which had been given by Gadianton and Kishkumen. Now behold, it is these secret oaths and covenants, which Alma commanded his son should not go forth unto the world, lest they should be a means of bringing down the people unto destruction. Now behold, those secret oaths and covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton from the records which were delivered unto Helaman; but behold, they were put into the heart of Gadianton, by that same being who did entice our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit; yea, that same being who did plot with Cain, that if he would murder his brother Abel, it should not be known unto the world. And he did plot with Cain and his followers, from that time forth. And also it is that same being who put it into the hearts of the people, to build a tower sufficiently high that they might get to Heaven. And it was that same being which led on the people which came from that tower, into this land; which spread the works of darkness and abominations over all the face of the land, until he dragged the people down to an entire destruction, and to an everlasting hell; yea, it is that same being who put it into the heart of Gadianton, to still carry on the work of darkness, and of secret murder; and he hath brought it forth from the beginning of man, even down to this time. And behold, it is he which is the author of all sin.

And behold, he doth carry on his works of darkness and secret murder, and doth hand down their plots, and their oaths, and their covenants, and their plans of awful wickedness, from generation to generation, according as he can get hold upon the hearts of the children of men. And now behold, he had got great hold upon the hearts of the Nephites; yea, insomuch that they had become exceeding wicked; yea, the more part of them had turned out of the way of righteousness, and did trample under their feet the commandments of God, and did turn unto their own ways, and did build up unto themselves idols of their gold and their silver.

And it came to pass that all these iniquities did come unto them, in the space of not many years, insomuch that a more part of it had come unto them in the sixty and seventh year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi. And they did grow in their iniquities, in the sixty and eighth year also, to the great sorrow and lamentation of the righteous. And thus we see that the Nephites did begin to dwindle in unbelief, and grow in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites began to grow exceedingly in the knowledge of their God; yea, they did begin to keep his statutes and commandments, and to walk in truth and uprightness before him. And thus we see that the spirit of the Lord began to withdraw from the Nephites, because of the wickedness and the hardnes of their hearts. And thus we see that the Lord began to pour out his spirit upon the Lamanites, because of their easiness and willingness to believe in his word.

And it came to pass that the Lamanites did hunt the band of robbers of Gadianton; and they did preach the word of God among the more wicked part of them, insomuch that this band of robbers was utterly destroyed from among the Lamanites. And it came to pass on the other hand, that the Nephites did build them up and support them, beginning at the more wicked part of them, until they had overspread all the land of the Nephites, and had seduced the more part of the righteous, until they had come down to believe in their works, and partake of their spoils, and to join with them in their secret murders and combinations. And thus they did obtain the sole management of the government, insomuch that they did trample under their feet, and smite, and rend, and turn their backs upon the poor, and the meek, and humble followers of God. And thus we see that they were in an awful state, and ripen-

JOSEPH SMITH *The Book of Mormon* PALMYRA, 1830 BRIDWELL LIBRARY Octavo